



Federal Bar Association
Capitol Hill Chapter

Capitol Assets

Federal Bar Association Capitol Hill Chapter
Fall/Winter 2018 Newsletter



Left to right: Non-traditional career panelists Mary Levering and Bob DeSousa, FBA program organizer Warren Burke, and panelist Jen Van Buren.

Joint Capitol Hill Chapter and Federal Career Services Division program: Exploring non-traditional legal careers

Being a “practicing lawyer” doesn’t necessarily mean going to court or drawing up wills and contracts. To explore nontraditional career possibilities, the FBA Capitol Hill Chapter and Federal Career Services Division sponsored a luncheon program at the Library of Congress on December 3 on “Nontraditional Legal Careers.” The panelists were Jen Van Buren, Director of the Office of Career Strategy at Georgetown University Law Center; Robert J. DeSousa, State Director for U.S. Senator Pat Toomey, and past FBA National President; and Mary Levering, a past Senior Executive in the Library of Congress.

Continued Next Page

Joint Program: Exploring non-traditional legal careers

Continued from Page 1

“Twelve percent of recent national law grads are in ‘J.D. advantage’ jobs rather than traditional practicing attorney positions,” Van Buren noted. Many employers are interested in attorneys for positions in which a law degree is not required, but it provides authority and skills that employers value.

While students are putting in more thought before jumping into law school due to the cost, some are still considering a non-traditional outcome, such as consulting, policy, education, and many other options, according to Van Buren. Others find their way to non-traditional legal work when other options are not the right fit. Some work as lawyers first, and Van Buren observed that it is easier to go from lawyer to a non-traditional position than the other way around. In her work in law student career services, she helps expose students to the range of options, and supports validation of their choices. Students and sometimes their families may be concerned about the road less traveled, but by connecting students with alumni and introducing them to others who have followed less traditional paths, she helps student make connections and forge paths that fit their lives. Few non-traditional employers hold on-campus interviews, so students and alumni interested in non-traditional paths must put in more effort to pursue options, and to show potential employers what they bring to the table.

Bob DeSousa has a wealth of experience as an attorney and in positions that do not require a law degree. Starting out as a law clerk to a judge, and working as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, state Inspector General, business executive, and in many other positions, also earning a Bronze Star in the U.S. military along the way, he

brought significant personal experience to the discussion.

“It sound like my career was planned, but it wasn’t,” DeSousa said. “Doors closed, and windows opened.” He once thought he might be an AUSA for his entire career, but he built many relationships along the way that led to other fulfilling positions. He joined a group of friends and colleagues that had a weekly lunch, which led to a new opportunity. Positions on Capitol Hill generally are not advertised, but through connections he was recommended for a position.

DeSousa, a past National President of the FBA, recommended involvement in the Association. “Be engaged,” he said. “What you know and who you know may end up mattering. Know you are good, and do a good job. Show up. Persevere. Be good to people.”

Mary Levering also offered personal insights from a career involved in programs ranging from copyright to foreign law. She has been self-supporting since she was a teenager, at a time when post-high school education for girls and women was not widely available. She did not start out with specific goals other than supporting herself, and seeking credentials that would allow for opportunities.

Early on, Levering was a parochial school teacher. This did not require a college degree at that time, but she was able to go to college at night for eight years to earn a Bachelor’s Degree. She then earned a Master’s Degree in Library Science, and being a good student, was selected for a

Continued Next Page

Joint Program: Exploring non-traditional legal careers

Continued from Page 2

Library of Congress program, which opened many doors, and a whole new world. She moved up, and moved over to the Congressional Research Service. Law school was a natural choice, and she was able to work during the day and attend law school at night, which she found to be particularly collegial given the student's busy lives. She then moved on to other Federal programs, eventually becoming a Senior Executive. She was tapped for the breadth and effectiveness of her experience. One of the programs on which she worked involved international and comparative law, exposing her to law in

various countries of the world. Although retired from Federal service, she is on her way to a goal of visiting every country in the world.

"My career was widely varied, and the legal training truly helped," Levering said.

Some important tips in response to audience questions included using LinkedIn, picking up the phone when people call, keeping up connections, helping out, and joining professional organizations.

DeSousa used a "Noah's Ark" metaphor to describe an approach to a career path. The highlights, roughly, are:

1. Don't miss the boat. Be alert to opportunities and take them.
2. We're all on the same boat. Be nice and cordial.
3. Plan ahead. It was not raining before the ark was built. Have broad goals, and be able to adapt. Be skeptical of critics; Noah was not an boat-builder, but those who built the Titanic were.
4. Take your time. The snail and the cheetah both made it on the boat. Speed is not necessary.
5. There is always a rainbow at the end.
6. Build on high ground. Be ethical.

Here is more information about the speakers at this program:

Jen Van Buren is the Director in the Office of Career Strategy at Georgetown University Law Center. In her role as a career advisor, she specializes in advising JD students on Capitol Hill, lobbying, and private sector careers. Jen developed and coordinates an annual "Spring Break on the Hill" networking program at the Law Center (the program is currently in its 6th year!), co-created a Hill/lobbying listserv, has sponsored various Hill and lobbying programs, has written an article on Hill careers for the National Association of Legal Placement, and is

Continued Next Page

Joint Program: Exploring non-traditional legal careers

Continued from Page 1

passionate about supporting students who are interested in political and government relations careers. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from New York University and her Juris Doctor from Boston University School of Law. Prior to being a career advisor, Jen spent 3 years as a tax attorney at a large New York firm. When she isn't working with her students, Jen spends her time with her husband, who works in health policy, and her two toddler sons.

Robert J. DeSousa is the state director for U.S. Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania. He is a colonel in the judge advocate general's corp in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. DeSousa served in Operation Iraqi Freedom where he earned, among other things, the Bronze Star Medal. He has served the federal government as a law clerk and as an assistant U.S. attorney; he has served the commonwealth of Pennsylvania as chief counsel of the Department of State and as the state's inspector general. Mr. DeSousa also has many years of business and legal experience in the private sector, most recently as counsel for the Dethlefs-Pykosh Law Group. Mr. DeSousa is the Past National President of the Federal Bar Association. He recently served as the State Judge Advocate for the Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Treasurer of the Dauphin County General Authority, and the Chairman of the Board of the National Civil War Museum. Mr. DeSousa received his bachelor's degree from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA and his law degree from the Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle, PA. and his Masters from the US Army War College, Carlisle PA.

Mary Levering is a lawyer, librarian and educator. After working for the Library of Congress (LC) for 45 years, rising from an entry-level, junior professional to SES (senior government executive) level, she retired from LC in 2011. She joined LC's staff in 1966, after earning a Master's Degree in Library Science (MLS) from the University of Washington. Later, while working in LC's Congressional Research Service (CRS), she attended Georgetown University Law Center and received a Juris Doctor (JD) degree in 1977 with a specialty in Copyright Law. During her 45-year career, she worked in every department of the Library of Congress, including serving as Associate Register for National Copyright Programs in the U.S. Copyright Office and Director of Legal Research in the Law Library of Congress. She is a member of the DC Bar, the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, and the Federal Bar Association/Capitol Hill Chapter. Mary is an experienced SCUBA diver, an ardent yoga practitioner, a voracious reader, and an avid world traveler. Of the 195 countries recognized by the U.S. Dept. of State, she has visited 173 countries to date. In the coming years she hopes to complete her goal of visiting every country in the world.

FBA Capitol Hill Chapter Annual Meeting features Beth Nolan, past White House Counsel and current General Counsel for the George Washington University



Beth Nolan, The George Washington University

Nolan offers insights on roles of the university lawyer

Our nation's oldest universities are institutions older than our system of government itself. As in government, the role of the lawyer in an academic institution is critical to its stability and ongoing success. The Capitol Hill Chapter of the Federal Bar Association gained insights into the challenging role of the university lawyer at the Chapter's annual meeting held at lunch at Tortilla Coast on November 27.

Beth Nolan, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of the George Washington University, was the featured speaker. Ms. Nolan, the chief legal officer for the university since 2007, directs all legal services for GW, providing legal counsel, preventive legal guidance, and related services in support of the university's teaching and research mission. Prior to her current position, Ms. Nolan made history as the first woman to serve in the role of White House Counsel. She has also been a GW law professor and practiced law at the Department of Justice and as a partner at Crowell & Moring in Washington, D.C.

Continued Next Page

Nolan offers insights on roles of the university lawyer

Continued from Page 5

Ms. Nolan provided an engaging perspective on a legal office that covers an extraordinarily diverse range of issues. While a typical organization might deal with transactions, employment, liability, and litigation matters, the 22 staff, including 13 attorneys, in her university counsel office offer advice on topics well beyond the traditional scope. The university runs a hospital, ambulances, research facilities, and a police force. It is a landlord managing property. Legal issues arise involving faculty, staff, students, and others involved with the university. Some legal situations arise in which the university decides to retain outside counsel for specialized work.

In addition to a highly engaging presentation, Ms. Nolan responded to a wide range of questions from Chapter members in the audience. For example, she discussed who the client is in the university counsel setting, and the distinction between legal advice vs. strategic advising. Ms. Nolan also made observations about business roles that lawyers sometimes fall into that might be more suitable for other parts of an organization. If an unfamiliar issue arises, she noted that counsel for universities across the nation can confer with colleagues through a national association in which they are able to share ideas and experiences. In short, the Chapter enjoyed an fascinating and highly successful annual meeting speaker.

New officers sworn in at Chapter's annual meeting

FBA Capitol Hill Chapter Officers for 2019 were sworn in at the annual meeting on November 27. The officers are:

President

Ethan Torrey is the Legal Counsel of the Supreme Court of the United States. He was previously a partner at Choate, Hall & Stewart LLP, and an associate at Ropes & Gray LLP. He served as a law clerk to the Honorable Leonard Garth, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He received his J.D. from Columbia Law School. He was re-elected to a second term as Chapter President.

Treasurer

Geoff Cheshire is a Legal and Policy Attorney Advisor for the Defender Services Office at the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Prior to joining the AO, Geoff served as an Assistant Federal Public Defender for the District of Arizona. Geoff is a former president of the FBA's Capitol Hill Chapter and Tucson Chapter and former Chair of the Criminal Law Section. He currently serves on the FBA's Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Resolutions Committee, Bench and Bar Committee, and as a member of the Centennial Celebration Committee.

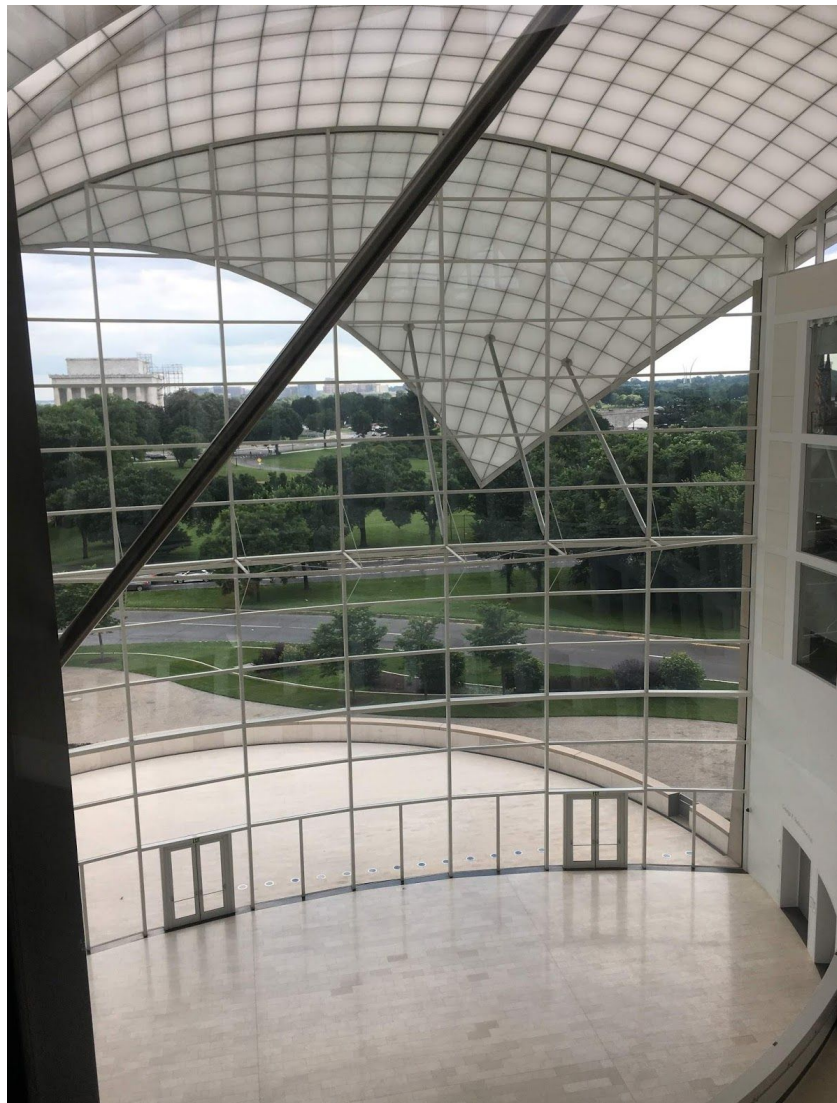
Secretary

Nicole Kolinski is an Associate General Counsel for the Architect of the Capitol Office of General Counsel where her duties include advising on environmental law, procurement law, ethics, and appropriations law. She is a member of the Virginia Bar and Supreme Court Bar. Nicole is a graduate of George Mason University School of Law where she served as the Executive Editor of the George Mason Journal of Law, Economics, and Policy. Nicole has served as the Chapter's Communications Chairperson and as a Council Member. She was re-elected to a second term as Chapter Secretary.

Capitol Hill Chapter tours United States Institute of Peace

The FBA Capitol Hill Chapter took a special tour of the United States Institute of Peace on June 6 in the late afternoon. The U.S. Institute of Peace is an independent national institute, founded by Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical, and essential for U.S. and global security. USIP pursues this vision on the ground in conflict zones, working with local partners to prevent conflicts from turning to bloodshed and to end it when they do. The Institute provides training, analysis, and other resources to people, organizations, and governments working to build peace.

Chapter members toured the Institute and met with Megan Chabalowski about USIP's programs, and with George Foote, General Counsel for the Institute of Peace.



A sweeping view inside the U.S. Institute of Peace.



Capitol Hill Chapter members on the roof deck at the U.S. Institute of Peace.



Megan Chabalowski discussed USIP's programs, and George Foote, USIP's General Counsel, described the role of attorneys with the Institute.



2018 Annual Supreme Court Luncheon features Associate Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

The FBA Capitol Hill Chapter's Annual Supreme Court Luncheon on June 25 featured Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who made brief remarks and answered questions from the gathered members.

Justice Ginsburg was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 15, 1933. She married Martin D. Ginsburg in 1954 and has a daughter, Jane, and a son, James. She received her B.A. from Cornell University, attended Harvard Law School, and received her LL.B. from Columbia Law School. She served as a law clerk to the Honorable Edmund L. Palmieri, Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York from 1959–1961. From 1961–1963, she was a research associate and then associate

Continued Next Page

Associate Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Continued from Page 9

director of the Columbia Law School Project on International Procedure. She was a Professor of Law at Rutgers University School of Law from 1963–1972 and Columbia Law School from 1972–1980, and a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford from 1977–1978. In 1971, she was instrumental in launching the Women’s Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, serving as the ACLU’s General Counsel from 1973–1980 and on the National Board of Directors from 1974–1980. She was appointed a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 1980. President Clinton nominated her as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court and she took her seat on August 10, 1993.

Scenes from Events in the Fall/Winter Term of the Federal Bar Association Capitol Hill Chapter



Chapter President Ethan Torrey addresses the membership.



GWU General Counsel Beth Nolan addresses the chapter.



An informal moment at the non-traditional careers lunch.



Touring the U.S. Institute of Peace.

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More photos and stories from 2018 are in the Spring 2018 *Capitol Assets* newsletter. Find this information on the Capitol Hill Chapter's web page at:

<http://www.fedbar.org/Chapters/Capitol-Hill-Chapter.aspx>.

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What would you like to see covered in this newsletter? Contact Jana Patterson at janagagner@gmail.com. Thank you!



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